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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes and analyzes the results of a questionnaire study of mentors and beginning teachers. The objective of the questionnaire study was to corroborate and extend the information gathered in a previous interview study. Mentors and beginning teachers were presented with statements describing the support given to beginning teachers and the conditions under which beginning teachers worked. They were asked to indicate, on a scale of 1 to 4, what was occurring and what should be occurring. In view of the conclusions from the previous interview study--that strategies should be explored to encourage mentor-novice consultation on higher-level teaching skills and that steps should be taken to encourage the maintenance of a high level of assistance after the first semester and in the second year--this study indicates that capacity building, support systems, and encouragement to try additional practices in mentoring are in order. Ten recommendations are offered. The questionnaires for mentor teachers and beginning teachers are included in an appendix. (Author/JD)

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Research Report 91-1

THE OPINIONS OF MENTORS AND BEGINNING TEACHERS

What Do They Say About Induction?

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Abstract

The paper summarizes and analyzes the results of a questionnaire study of mentors and beginning teachers. The objective of the questionnaire study was to corroborate and extend the information gathered in an interview study, described in Research Report 90-7, *School-Based Mentoring: Untangling the Tensions Between Theory and Practice*. Mentors and beginning teachers were presented with statements describing the support given to beginning teachers and the conditions under which beginning teachers worked. They were asked to indicate, on a scale of 1 to 4, what was occurring and what should be occurring. Conclusions, projections beyond current thinking and practice, and recommendations are offered.

The Opinions of Mentors and Beginning Teachers

What Do They Say About Induction?

Alan J. Reiman
Roy A. Edelfelt

This paper reports the findings of a questionnaire study of selected beginning teachers and their mentors. It was part of a larger ethnographic investigation, the aims of which were to identify the contextual factors in schools that ameliorate (make better) or restrain relationships between mentors and novices, and to investigate the ways in which mentors' and novices' attitudes toward problem solving influenced their relationship. The questionnaire study developed during the final phase of the ethnography. It grew from a desire to obtain more data. That is, the intent was to corroborate what interviews had revealed; to check the influence of long-term mentor training, with its focus on developmental supervision; and to examine the degree to which the intent of the North Carolina Initial Certification Program was being carried out.

Limitations and Special Circumstances

In considering the questionnaire data, the reader should be aware of several limitations and at least two special circumstances. In regard to limitations, first, the study represents only eight schools. Second, the schools were not selected at random. However, they did include elementary, middle, and high schools and urban, suburban, and rural settings. Third, two beginning teachers (and their mentors) were interviewed in each school, although in most of the schools there were more than two beginners. Fourth, it was assumed that all the items on the questionnaire would be relevant to and be answered by all respondents. However, in a few instances this turned out not to be the case.

In regard to special circumstances, first, in all but one of the eight schools, the mentors were veteran teachers who had had extended training in mentoring. Second, our interpretation of the questionnaire data was influenced by our participation in the interviews.

Respondents

Questionnaires were sent to all of the teachers who had been interviewed: 22 mentors (all women) and 16 beginners (13 women and 3 men), referred to in the mentors' questionnaire as ICTs—initially certified teachers. Questionnaire items included ideas that had been explored and themes that had emerged in the interviews. We did not ask respondents to give their names, hoping that anonymity would invite greater candor. Responding was voluntary. Eighty-six percent of the mentors and 75 percent of the beginning teachers returned a completed questionnaire.

Design of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed in several stages. Drafts were critiqued by two university professors (experts in mentor training), two mentor teachers, two mentor-teacher trainers, an Initial Certification Personnel Coordinator, and various school personnel, all from buildings other than those in the study.

To comprehend the unique circumstances of beginning teachers and mentors in induction, a different instrument was developed for each group (copies appear in Appendix A). The instruments employed a discrepancy model of investigation. Both were set up in four columns.

Column 1. On the questionnaire for mentors the first column contained 74 statements addressing—

1. the adequacy of time and support to do the job of mentoring—for example, "I have enough time to work with my ICT."
2. the nature of the job in terms of observation, consultation, promotion of novice understanding, etc.—for example, "I consult with my ICT on discipline," "I support my ICT in maintaining his or her well-being," and "I challenge my ICT to stay current professionally."
3. the knowledge, the techniques, and the other kinds of resources used by the mentor—for example, "I have been able to use the knowledge and techniques learned in mentor training" and "I use developmental theory in my work with my ICT."

The first column in the version for beginning teachers contained 46 statements describing—

1. beginners' perceptions of their situation and their reactions to it—for example, "I was receptive to criticism" and "Students were responsive to the way I taught."
2. the kinds of assistance and support provided by mentors and other school personnel—for example, "My mentor provided assistance with classroom management" and "My mentor was in my classroom."
3. the conditions under which novices worked—for example, "My teaching assignment was realistic for a beginner" and "There were opportunities to exchange ideas with colleagues."

Columns 2 and 3. In the second column of the two questionnaires, both beginning and mentor teachers were asked to indicate on a four-point scale "what is"—that is, the degree to which each of the conditions in the first column was available or operative in their situation. The scale was as follows:

1 = never or hardly ever
2 = sometimes
3 = frequently
4 = always or almost always

In the third column mentors and novices were asked to indicate on the same scale "what should be"—that is, the degree to which each of the conditions should be available or operative.

Column 4. In the fourth column respondents were asked to rate the importance of each item in the first column, on a scale of 1 to 10:

1 = of little importance
10 = exceedingly important.

Interpretation of Results

The opinions expressed in the middle two columns made possible calculating a numerical (and percentage) difference, or discrepancy, between what existed and what was desirable. The range of choice on the 4-point scale was 3; that is, from 1 to 4 was a distance of 3. We decided that an average discrepancy of 1 or more—at least a one-third difference between what respondents thought was occurring and what they thought should be occurring—was sufficient to warrant attention. Also, we thought it important to note items on which there was close agreement between what respondents indicated was happening and what they thought should be occurring, because such agreement suggested satisfaction with the status quo.

In this kind of research the weight to be given an item on which there is wide discrepancy or near agreement depends on the people surveyed and other circumstances. In both instances (wide discrepancy and near agreement), collective responses reflect opinion. The importance of collective sentiment, then, turns at least in part on how knowledgeable and objective informants are. In addition, responses depend on a host of environmental factors, such as the context of a particular school, its social and psychological climate, the nature and the quality of the principal's performance, teacher-teacher and teacher-principal relationships, and trust levels among faculty.

It must also be recognized that reality is in the eye of the beholder. School personnel may see their situation differently than outside observers do. As a consequence, researchers may not agree with the collective opinion of informants. Even if researchers see the situation correctly, the way in which respondents see it is the way that they believe it to be and, incidentally, the view from which they function. Beginning and mentor teachers' views were expressed in the two questionnaires reported and analyzed in this report. The extent to which those views agree with the data that researchers collected in interviews provides a check on the perceptions of the researchers. For all of these reasons, a variety of ways of viewing the discrepancy data are considered in the analysis.

In the reporting and discussion that follow, the items with the widest and narrowest discrepancies are identified, along with their ratings according to importance. The latter information provides guidance as to the urgency that respondents attached to the items.

Several items on the two questionnaires were similar. That made possible an analysis of perceptions and opinions on comparable topics.

Analyses of the items on which mentor teachers indicated wide discrepancies and near agreement are presented first. Then the same kinds of data on beginners' responses are reported. Next, a comparison is made between items on both questionnaires that represent similar conditions or practices. Finally, there are conclusions and recommendations.

Responses of Mentors

Items of Wide Discrepancy

Mentors indicated a wide discrepancy (1 or more—33% and up) between what was and what should be on only 2 of the 74 items. These items and the corresponding data are presented in Table 1 along with the importance attached to each.

The wide discrepancy that mentors perceived on the adequacy of time for the practice of mentoring corroborated the testimony of mentor teachers in interviews. In both interview and questionnaire data, time was clearly a critical need and the lack of it an area of dissatisfaction. Overall, this deficiency may have influenced mentor teachers' concept of responsibility in the induction program. Mentors, for example, spent most of their time on the functions that beginners found most critical. That is illustrated by the agreement on items such as classroom management and discipline.

The wide discrepancy on the matter of assisting beginners in interpreting standardized test scores was surprising. The topic did not surface in any contacts with school personnel during the interview study, and mentors did not rate it high in importance.

One might infer from there being so few items on which the discrepancy was wide, that mentors were largely without serious problems, that they were performing at a level they thought adequate. Our assessment from the interviews suggested otherwise. Many mentors expressed a desire to do more than time permitted. That conclusion is

Table 1
Items on Which There Was Wide Discrepancy for Mentors

Item	Numerical Discrepancy	Percentage of Discrepancy	Item Rating
I have enough time to work with my ICT.	1.37	46%	8.9
I assist my ICT with interpreting standardized test scores.	1.07	35%	6.5

Table 2
Items on Which There Was Near Agreement for Mentors

Item	Numerical Discrepancy	Percentage of Discrepancy	Item Rating
I encourage ICT reflection through conferences.	.11	4%	8.4
I have been able to use the knowledge and techniques learned in mentor training.	.11	3%	9.1
I consult with my ICT on discipline.	.11	3%	8.5
I consult with my ICT on classroom management.	.11	3%	8.6
I make formal observations of my ICT.	.15	5%	7.6
I support my ICT in maintaining his or her well-being.	.21	7%	8.9
I vary the amount of structure employed in working with my ICT.	.21	7%	8.2
I consult with my ICT on school routines.	.22	7%	8.0
I consult with my ICT on personal concerns.	.26	8%	8.8
I consult with my ICT on finding materials.	.27	9%	8.2
I use developmental theory in my work with my ICT.	.29	10%	8.1

supported in part by the great importance that mentors assigned to so many items (see Table 4). We can probably assume that mentors would have provided more assistance if enough time had been available, having given a rating of 7 or higher to 37 of the 74 items. We look further into the importance that mentors assigned to various items following our discussion of items of near agreement. Impressions, projections, and conclusions about the very few items identified by mentors with wide discrepancies and the many identified by beginning teachers are also discussed later.

Items of Near Agreement

On 11 of the 74 items there was near agreement—10 percent or less—between what mentors perceived was happening and what they thought should be taking place. The 11 items are listed in Table 2, along with amount of discrepancy and rating of importance.

Not only are the items in Table 2 actions on which mentors agreed they were doing what they should be doing, but also many of them are items that mentors considered to be important (see Table 4). The items fall into four categories: those that are or appear to be mandated (e.g., formal observations and school routines), those that grow out of necessity (e.g., discipline and classroom management), those that have been emphasized in mentor training (e.g., conferring with beginners, maintaining beginners' well-being, and varying the amount of structure used in working with beginners), and those to which mentors have strong commitments (e.g., personal concerns and finding materials). In many schools these items also represent basic essentials for success in teaching. These categories—the sanctions of government, the elements of teaching that mentors believe to be critical, the elements of training that prove relevant, and personal professional commitments—may begin to sketch the forces that drive mentors' behavior. This topic needs more probing.

The list of items on which there was close agreement for mentors seems short. Later in this report (see Table 4) all of the items that rated high in importance are identified, and possible reasons are discussed for mentors' near agreement on some highly important items, but not on others. A question might be, In the induction of new teachers, how can we promote implementation of desirable practices (items deemed very important) and essential practices?

One conclusion is clear: We must continue to ponder why there were so few wide discrepancies and so many near agreements. Another conclusion, supported by the average rating of importance given to these two clusters of items, is that the items represented what mentors believed they ought to be doing (or thought was needed or essential) and were doing. Interestingly 6 of the 11 items relate to the mentor's supporting the novice's survival: consulting on discipline, classroom management, school routines, personal concerns, and finding materials; and providing support in maintaining well-being. That makes sense: Survival is a first order of concern for beginners.

The Need to Take a Second Look

Are mentors without serious problems? We concluded from the interviews that there were problems in the induction program, and mentor teachers recognized that. How serious the problems were needs more study. Mentors in the schools we visited were carrying very heavy assignments, not unusual in North Carolina; time to reflect on their effectiveness in assisting beginning teachers apparently was not a prerogative that mentors enjoyed. Also, long-term mentor training is comparatively new—three years or less for most teachers interviewed. Further, there are few operational models of ideal induction programs or of mentor teacher roles and functions. We can say that most mentor teachers had no exemplary program against which to compare their performance, and we learned in interviews that few mentor teachers had had time to visit other schools to see how teachers there functioned in the role of mentor. These and other circumstances may be the reasons for the scant number of great discrepancies identified between what is and what should be.

Having said that, we hasten to add that the mentor teachers revealed in the interviews that their training and working in an induction program was a breath of fresh air compared with what had been. Probably all of these factors influenced their questionnaire responses. We also hasten to say that the mentors in the study were diligent, highly committed people, devoted to helping novices under the existing circumstances.

A number of factors caused us to probe further into the questionnaire data from mentors:

1. We had the impression from interview data that there was a considerable difference between reality and nirvana.
2. Questionnaire items had been selected in an attempt to provide evidence on themes that surfaced in interviews, that embodied concepts included in mentor training, and that were common in

the literature on good teaching and the supervision of prospective and beginning teachers.

3. Mentors had indicated in interviews that they had been able to use the knowledge and the techniques they had learned in mentor training.
4. In the beginning teachers' questionnaire data, the number of items with substantial discrepancies was 10 times the number in the data from mentor teachers, and the discrepancies themselves were considerably greater.
5. Mentor teachers rated many items as high in importance, whereas only a few of their responses indicated a great discrepancy between current and desired practice.

To explore the mentor teachers' questionnaire data further, we examined both the items on which there was the greatest discrepancy and the items that were rated most important.

Items with a discrepancy of 24 percent or more. We arbitrarily selected all the items on which the discrepancy was 24 percent or greater. Mentors indicated a difference of more than 24 percent between what was and what should be on 14 of the 74 items. Two have already been mentioned in Table 1. The 12 remaining ones are listed in Table 3.

The list in Table 3 is not impressive from the standpoint of the importance that mentor teachers attached to each item (see Table 4). That is, no item is among the 17 deemed most important. However, most are activities that were reported widely in interviews. To an extent the data verify that these activities were not practiced as frequently as mentor teachers thought they should be.

Table 3
Items on Which There Was a Discrepancy of 24 Percent or More

Item	Numerical Discrepancy	Percentage of Discrepancy	Item Rating
I encourage ICT reflection through journal writing.	.88	29%	7.2
I assist my ICT with developing critical thinking.	.87	28%	8.1
I assist my ICT with designing teacher-made tests.	.86	28%	6.5
I assist my ICT with developing homework assignments.	.86	28%	6.8
I assist my ICT with working with exceptional children.	.87	28%	8.0
I assist my ICT with relating local issues to the curriculum	.87	28%	6.9
I challenge my ICT to be an active listener.	.82	27%	8.3
I support my ICT in individualizing instruction.	.82	27%	7.9
I help my ICT understand the community.	.76	25%	8.0
I support my ICT in finding effective ways to group students for learning.	.76	25%	7.8
I assist my ICT with working with the high-risk child.	.73	24%	8.0
I assist my ICT with employing democratic values.	.73	24%	7.1

The items may not have been perceived as more problematic or more important for a number of reasons. An overriding constraint for mentor teachers, already mentioned, was lack of time to do what they wanted to do or knew they should do. At this point in the development of induction programs, we can only speculate about other reasons for the modest discrepancies. One obvious explanation is that mentors were preoccupied with survival strategies. When controlling a class represented a crisis or a near crisis for a novice, working on other more sophisticated aspects of teaching probably got shunted aside. Everything cannot happen at once.

Another reason may have been mentors' inexperience with particular techniques and their consequent reluctance to encourage a novice to try those techniques. Data from the interview study indicated that mentors were reluctant to suggest a practice or a technique to a novice that they themselves did not employ. Some practices may not have been standard in the schools visited (e.g., documenting student learning and individualizing instruction). Others are recent innovations that may not yet have been tried (e.g., relating local issues to curriculum and reflecting through journal writing). In addition, several of the items on the questionnaire undoubtedly represented ideas to which some mentors were not strongly committed.

Most of the mentors responding to the questionnaire had been trained for a semester or longer in the skills and the knowledge essential to their role. Some of the practices illustrated and demonstrated in that training were not evident, even though mentors agreed that they had been able to use the knowledge and the techniques that they had learned in mentor training. Among the practices emphasized in training that interviews revealed were not yet in wide use were reflection on teaching through journal writing, active listening, cooperative learning, demonstration teaching, planning for achieving measurable outcomes from teaching, and documentation of student learning. Hence, mentor teachers may not have been able to respond decisively about the degree to which any of those practices were ideally implemented.

Rating of items in importance. Another analysis involved the items that mentor teachers rated high in importance (see Table 4). On a 10-point scale, 17 of 74 items were rated 8.5 or higher (37 were rated 8.0 or higher).

The items rated most important are interesting to ponder. They range in degree of discrepancy from 0.11 (3%) to 1.37 (46%). The degree of discrepancy on the items bears practically no relationship to the importance that teachers assigned to them. That fact is puzzling and requires further investigation, for we found no evidence in the interviews to suggest lack of a relationship. It would be instructive, for example, to know whether the time that mentors spent on the activities they deemed most important was commensurate with the rating that they gave those activities.

The items include aspects of mentors' role and function, use of knowledge and techniques learned in training, and a number of basic

Table 4
Rating of Items in Importance*

Item	Numerical Discrepancy	Percentage of Discrepancy	Item Rating
I challenge my ICT to employ positive reinforcement.	.38	13%	9.3
I help my ICT understand managing time.	.43	14%	9.1
My ICT is interested in my assistance.	.33	11%	9.1
I have been able to use the knowledge and techniques learned in mentor training.	.11	3%	9.1
I have enough time to work with my ICT.	1.37	46%	8.9
I confer with my ICT.	.58	19%	8.9
I support my ICT in maintaining his or her well-being.	.21	7%	8.9
I support my ICT in fostering self-evaluation.	.47	16%	8.9
I challenge my ICT to reflect on teaching.	.55	19%	8.8
I consult with my ICT on personal concerns.	.26	9%	8.8
I challenge my ICT to analyze his or her teaching.	.61	20%	8.7
I challenge my ICT to evaluate his or her teaching.	.61	20%	8.7
I consult with my ICT on skills in questioning.	.37	12%	8.7
I consult with my ICT on classroom management.	.11	3%	8.6
I assist my ICT with motivating students.	.58	20%	8.6
I challenge my ICT to document student learning.	.63	21%	8.6
I consult with my ICT on discipline.	.11	3%	8.5

*A few mentors did not answer all of the questions. Averages represent the number responding on each item.

considerations in teaching. The high level of importance that mentors assigned to these items, we surmise, indicates that they believed the items to be most important in the support of novice teachers. The items include some of the critical elements in teaching and reveal several values expressed by mentor teachers in interviews: a concern for students, teaching skills, managing students, and time; and the need to reflect on, analyze, and evaluate teaching. The ratings also disclose a humanitarian consciousness and empathy for the beginner as a person. Surprisingly a concern for subject matter does not surface.

Responses of Beginning Teachers

The opinions of beginning teachers were sought on the kinds of assistance they recognized as essential in the first year of teaching. Even though every beginner does not need help in all the areas included in the questionnaire, nor the same kind and degree of assistance, most of the aspects of teaching included do need to be checked and refined during the induction period.

Items of Wide Discrepancy

Just as with the mentors, beginners were asked to respond to items in terms of what was happening and what they thought should be happening. A wide discrepancy was evident on 24 of the 46 items (see Table 5). In other words, on more than half of the items, the discrepancy was 33 percent or greater. For beginners, there were many more

Table 5
Items on Which There Was Wide Discrepancy for Beginners

Item	Numerical Discrepancy	Percentage of Discrepancy	Item Rating
The materials I needed for teaching were available	1.83	61%	9.3
Feedback from classroom observations was helpful.	1.75	58%	9.6
My teaching assignment was realistic for a beginner.	1.75	58%	9.6
I have had adequate time to plan.	1.50	50%	9.0
There were opportunities to exchange ideas with colleagues.	1.50	50%	8.1
I have been helped to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies.	1.45	48%	8.1
The climate in our school supported a good learning environment for students.	1.41	47%	9.1
The climate in our school supported a good learning environment for me as a beginning teacher.	1.41	47%	9.3
I participated in decisions on school policy.	1.25	41%	7.1
There was time to reflect on my teaching.	1.25	41%	8.0
We used technology to great advantage in our school.	1.16	38%	7.3
Teaching was what I thought it would be.	1.08	36%	8.2
I had opportunities to visit and observe exemplary teachers.	1.08	36%	7.0
I felt a part of the school community.	1.08	36%	8.6
I got adequate clerical support.	1.10	36%	8.3
The rules and requirements in our school were reasonable.	1.00	33%	8.3
I found satisfaction in teaching.	1.00	33%	9.1
I have been helped to develop my own teaching style.	1.00	33%	8.0
I got help and encouragement from my principal.	1.00	33%	9.4
Students were responsive to the way I taught.	1.00	33%	9.2

items with a wide discrepancy (24 of 46) than there were for mentor teachers (2 of 74). In addition, most of the discrepancies perceived by beginners were wider (a range of 33% to 61%) than those perceived by mentor teachers (a range of 35% to 46%). The beginners may have set their expectations too high, or they may have been too idealistic, or they may have been led to believe in college that schools were different than they turned out to be.

In one sense the items listed in Table 5 are conditions of support and professional practice that beginners rated as less than satisfactory. The wide discrepancy suggests that novices thought these aspects of the initiation into teaching were not what they should have been.

Items of Near Agreement

The areas in which there was little discrepancy between what novices found to be occurring and what they thought was desirable were fewer than with mentor teachers. Table 6 presents items on which the discrepancy was 11 percent or less. Counting items with a discrepancy of 10 percent or less, there were 6 for beginners, 11 for

Table 6
Items on Which There Was Near Agreement for Beginners

Item	Numerical Discrepancy	Percentage of Discrepancy	Item Rating
My mentor can describe teaching concepts in a way that is understandable.	17	5%	7.4
I was receptive to criticism.	17	5%	7.3
I sought feedback from students.	18	5%	7.6
My mentor provided assistance with classroom management.	25	8%	7.8
My mentor was in my classroom.	25	8%	6.2
Classroom management was a problem for me.	-.27*	-9%*	8.8
I communicated with parents.	33	11%	7.6
My mentor provided assistance with personal concerns.	33	11%	7

*The negative rating indicates that the problem was occurring more frequently than beginners thought it should.

mentors. The items appear to be areas of urgent need, ego, and responsiveness to students and parents. The negative rating on classroom management indicates that the problem was occurring more frequently than novices thought it should.

Responses of Mentors and Beginners Compared

On at least a dozen topics, there was an opportunity to compare mentors' and beginning teachers' opinions (see Table 7). On some items they found a measure of agreement. On others there was a great difference. The data are very consistent with the information we obtained in the interviews.

Both mentors and beginners apparently found the time to work together inadequate. They agreed that attention was given to discipline and classroom management. They concurred on the support provided for personal concerns and the beginner's well-being as well as on the advocacy role of the mentor teacher in acting on the novice's behalf. There was also concurrence on assistance given with instruction, on communicating with parents, and on understanding the community.

The mentors and the beginners were far apart on feedback from observation. Interviews indicated that classroom observation was not frequent. The degree to which this occurred because of lack of time or scheduling difficulties should be explored. There was also disagreement on involvement in decisions and policy as well as on support and assistance with technology. On the latter the use of computers or any other technology was not prominent in most schools. Finally, there was little concurrence on aspects of professional development.

The comparisons in Table 7 provide food for thought and discussion. The similarities and the differences in perceptions highlight several issues in mentoring that demand more attention. Granted, the items deserve better definition. Most personnel connected with teacher

Table 7
Items on Which Mentors' and Beginners' Responses Can Be Compared

Activity	Discrepancy for Mentors	Discrepancy for Beginners
I have enough time to work with my ICT.	1.37	
I have had adequate time to plan.		1.50
There was time to reflect on my teaching.		1.25
My mentor was in my classroom.		.25
I visit my ICT's classroom.	.21	
Feedback from classroom observations was helpful.		1.75
I make informal observations of my ICT.	.55	
I consult with my ICT on classroom management/My mentor mentor provided assistance with classroom management.	.11	.25
I consult with my ICT on discipline.	.11	
I consult with my ICT on finding materials.	.27	
The materials I needed for teaching were available.		1.83
I consult with my ICT on making materials.	.67	
I help my ICT understand school district policy.	.43	
I help my ICT understand school policy.	.38	
I participated in decisions on school policy.		1.25
The rules and requirements in our school were reasonable.		1.00
I help my ICT with communicating with parents/I communicated with parents.	.40	.33
I help my ICT understand the community.	.76	
I challenge my ICT to use technology.	.69	
We use technology to great advantage in our school.		1.16
I challenge my ICT to use computers.	.43	
I assist my ICT with planning professional development.	.33	
Professional development opportunities were provided.		.50
I have been helped to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies.		1.45
I had opportunities to visit and observe exemplary teachers.		1.08
I have been helped to develop my own teaching style.		1.00
I assist my ICT with motivating students.	.58	
Motivating students was very difficult.		-.67*
I consult with my ICT on personal concerns/My mentor provided assistance with personal concerns.	.26	.33
I support my ICT in maintaining his or her well-being.	.21	
My mentor has acted on my behalf.		.58
I help my ICT understand instructional theory and research.	.64	
I use developmental theory in my work with my ICT.	.29	
My mentor provided help with instructional concerns.		.54
My mentor can describe teaching concepts in a way that is understandable.		.16
I challenge my ICT to stay current professionally/My mentor helped me keep current professionally.	.56	.80

*The negative rating indicates that the problem was occurring more frequently than beginners thought it should.

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induction will understand in a general way the meanings of the terms in Table 7, but the parallels we have drawn deserve more clarification. Further, more precision in meaning of terms as well as discussion of agreements and differences will uncover additional insights.

As a beginning, aggregating data on mentors' and beginners' perceptions of what is and what should be occurring in induction provides some benchmark data against which future practice can be compared. It also provides data that can be compared in further research.

Some Conclusions

In view of the conclusions from the interviews—that strategies should be explored to encourage mentor-novice consultation on higher-level teaching skills and steps should be taken to encourage the maintenance of a high level of assistance after the first semester and in the second year—it is clear that capacity building, support systems, and encouragement to try additional practices in mentoring are in order. The task will require resources. Time alone will not be sufficient. Mentors need help and support to test and perfect skills in these and other practices and to develop greater awareness of the scope of the teaching act. Parallel to that, they need time and occasions to deliberate on the complexities of helping a neophyte acquire higher-level skills and knowledge in teaching; in other words, they need time to become teacher educators. The order is a tall one, but the rewards in better teacher performance, in school improvement, and in a greater retention of quality teachers could be substantial.

It might be concluded from the data and our remarks that induction is a time when there should be continuous support and challenge—constant encouragement to the novice to strive for excellence. True, but then again, not quite true. Both support and challenge take many forms and include a variety of procedures. Beginners need help with content, materials, and pedagogy, and they need personal psychological support. However, each novice is different, as are the contexts in which they teach; and the process of assisting is like a pendulum, swinging back and forth between support and challenge. Adult learners need time to reflect on, digest, and assimilate their experiences and the ideas that develop in discussions with mentors. This is both an intellectual and an emotional process, essential to incorporating new ideas and skills in teaching. One kind of reflection has occurred in districts that provide support groups for novice teachers. Other reflection is personal and private. We heard reports of personal reflection in interviews with beginning teachers. The survey added evidence that time is needed for such reflection.

Mentors must be flexible and understanding in orchestrating how and when they support and challenge. An appropriate balance and timing of the two requires intuition as well as thought. An almost indescribable balance seems to be in play with mentors who have achieved artistry in their role.

Beyond Current Thinking and Practice

No questions were raised in the survey about restructuring education or rearranging the way in which schools were organized. There was also no precise attention given to how the role of the teacher might change, or might need to change, to accomplish the practices suggested or implied in the questionnaire items. The status quo was assumed—that teachers would and should continue to function much as they have in traditional classrooms, that time would or should be scheduled in the same traditional way, that students would or should be grouped in classes of 25 to 30 for most instruction, that school would or should be largely academic and theoretical.

The tacit assumption among educators may be that teachers can do most of what the items included in the questionnaire suggest. That may not be the case. The teachers and the administrators in a few schools that we visited appeared to have decided that in traditional circumstances teachers could not accomplish all that the questionnaire items implied. Therefore they had created new arrangements and provisions for more or better conditions, schedule, and structure. In the three high schools we visited, the role of coordinator of mentors had been established. These coordinators were given time in their schedule for that function. In one elementary school every student's schedule had been restructured to provide short periods each day for instruction (largely in basic skills) via computer. In all three middle schools teachers had been reorganized into integrated teams of core-subject teachers to work with a specific group of students. The restructuring provided a common planning period in addition to the time each teacher traditionally had for such activity. In one high school, students in vocational education actually built a house as a hands-on learning project. The house on completion was sold and removed to the site of the owner.

The current period in education is a very difficult one for both preservice and inservice teacher education. College preparation and induction programs (and inservice programs) are faced with preparing people for roles that are changing. The tendency is to focus on the traditional role of the teacher and ignore the roles that are developing. Such criticism clearly can be made of this questionnaire study. The expectation was that many desirable teaching practices should be taking place, but no queries were raised as to whether mentor teachers or beginners were being challenged or helped to rearrange and restructure school so that learning could become more exciting, provocative, and stimulating for students.

Recommendations

The recommendations that follow may suggest that the practices listed were absent in the schools that we visited. That is not so. We learned that some of these were good practice through the data we collected. Others are conclusions from the interview and questionnaire data. All represent recommendations for any induction program.

1. Attention should be given to the different ways in which beginning and mentor teachers perceive teaching, school, and assistance.
2. Mentors should have more time allocated in their assignments to assist and support beginning teachers.
3. Beginning teachers should have lighter teaching assignments than veteran teachers so that they have time to plan, reflect, and learn from veterans.
4. Care should be taken in assigning beginning teachers, so that they do not get the toughest classes, the most difficult students, and the most preparations.
5. Attention should be given to the personal and management concerns of beginners so that the best possibilities exist for them to focus their full energy on the job of teaching.
6. Schools should have one mentor teacher in a coordinator role. The coordinator's job should be in part administrative (assigning beginners to mentors, arranging meetings for concerns groups, communicating district policy, etc.). The coordinators should also have responsibility for fostering and nurturing the skills and the abilities of mentor teachers so that they effectively assist beginners with higher-order teaching skills, especially in the second year.
8. The mentor and the novice teacher should be encouraged to improve professional development planning—making plans realistic, related to actual development, and sufficiently definitive to have genuine meaning for the novice.
9. More attention should be given to the kind of climate a school provides for the induction of new teachers.
10. Steps should be taken to build an awareness on the part of a total faculty about their role in assisting and supporting beginning teachers.

Appendix A, Part 1
Questionnaire for Mentor Teachers

Please indicate what you think about the following items in terms of what actually has happened with your ICT during your first or second year of mentoring. Then indicate what you think should happen with beginning teachers. Finally, indicate the importance you attach to each item.

The numbers alongside each item have the following meanings:

1 = never or hardly ever
2 = sometimes
3 = frequently
4 = always or almost always

1 = of little importance
10 = exceedingly important

Please circle the number in each column that reflects your opinion.

	What Is	What Should Be	Importance
I have enough time to work with my ICT.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I confer with my ICT.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My ICT is interested in my assistance.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I make—			
formal observations of my ICT.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
informal observations of my ICT.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I visit my ICT's classroom.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I consult with my ICT on—			
discipline.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
classroom management.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
school routines.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the content being taught.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
changing the way teachers and students work together.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
finding materials.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
selecting materials.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
making materials.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
developing curriculum.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
skills in questioning.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
cooperative learning.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

	What Is	What Should Be	Importance
personal concerns.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I support my ICT in—			
maintaining his or her well-being.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
fostering self-evaluation.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
increasing student self-direction and decision making.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
individualizing instruction.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
finding effective ways to group students for learning.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I help my ICT understand—			
the community.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the goals of school.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
different cultures, races, and life-styles.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
democratic values as they apply in school.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
instructional theory and research.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
different dialects and language usage.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the issues in promotion and retention.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the initial certification program.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
managing time.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
school policy.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
school district policy.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I assist my ICT with—			
identifying student needs.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
identifying student interests.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
motivating students.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
teaching basic skills.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
planning lessons to achieve measurable learning outcomes.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

	What Is	What Should Be	Importance
working with the high-risk child.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
working with exceptional children.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
developing critical thinking.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
employing democratic values.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
fostering problem solving.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
helping students help each other.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
developing homework assignments.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
evaluating student learning.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
designing teacher-made tests.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
interpreting standardized test scores.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
reporting student achievement.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
communicating with parents.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
relating local issues to the curriculum.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
planning professional development.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I challenge my ICT to—			
be an active listener.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
employ positive reinforcement.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
analyze his or her teaching.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
reflect on teaching.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
encourage original expression.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
evaluate his or her teaching.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
use technology.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
use computers.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
develop learning centers.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
document student learning.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
stay current professionally.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
promote equal opportunity.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

	What Is	What Should Be	Importance
I encourage ICT reflection through—			
conferences.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
journal writing.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
audiotaping.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
videotaping.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I have been able to use the knowledge and techniques learned in mentor training.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I do demonstration teaching.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I use developmental theory in my work with my ICT.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I use the research of Bruce Joyce in my work with my ICT.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I vary the amount of structure employed in working with my ICT.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please circle, check, or fill in blanks in the following as appropriate.

Mentoring second-year teachers requires (more or less) time than mentoring first-year teachers.

Teachers in my school (recognize or do not recognize) the value of assisting beginning teachers.

My ICT and I meet—
before school ____ between classes ____ during planning or free periods ____ during lunch ____
after school ____ in the evening ____ on Saturdays ____ other times (indicate) _____

I have completed— the State Department's mentor training _____ one semester of mentor training _____
the two-semester mentor training (including a guided practicum) _____

I have been a mentor for ____ years.

I have mentored ____ ICTs.

In my mentor load I have been assigned— one ICT at a time ____ more than one ICT at a time ____

I receive extra pay for mentoring. Yes ___ No ___ Amount _____

I am allocated time in my teaching load for mentoring. Yes ___ No ___ How much time? _____

I have professional responsibilities other than mentoring and teaching. Yes ___ No ___
Please indicate other responsibilities _____

My total professional load is (minimal, moderate, or excessive).

I teach in the _____ school district.

Appendix A, Part 2
Questionnaire for Beginning Teachers

Please indicate what you think about the following items in terms of what actually has happened during your first or second year of teaching. Then indicate what you think should happen with beginning teachers. Finally, indicate the importance you attach to each item.

The numbers alongside each item have the following meanings:

1 = never or hardly ever
2 = sometimes
3 = frequently
4 = always or almost always

1 = of little importance
10 = exceedingly important

Please circle the number in each column that reflects your opinion.

	What Is	What Should Be	Importance
I have had adequate time to plan.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My mentor provided assistance with classroom management.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My mentor provided help with instructional concerns.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My mentor provided assistance with personal concerns.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I received help from the district office on salary and certification questions.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My mentor was in my classroom.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I was receptive to criticism.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Feedback from classroom observations was helpful.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My teaching assignment was realistic for a beginner.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I discussed all aspects of teaching with my mentor.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My mentor helped me keep current professionally.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I had opportunities to talk with other novice teachers.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I got help from colleagues.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I sought feedback from students.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
There was time to reflect on my teaching.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

	What Is	What Should Be	Importance
I got adequate clerical support.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I found satisfaction in teaching.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Professional development opportunities were provided.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I have been helped to develop my own teaching style.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I followed the textbook in my teaching.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I have been helped to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I felt a part of the school community.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Teaching included mundane duties.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The materials I needed for teaching were available.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I got help and encouragement from my principal.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I was assessed by administration on the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The climate in our school supported a good learning environment for students.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The climate in our school supported a good learning environment for me as a beginning teacher.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I have thought that I would have liked to have been involved in the selection of my mentor.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I had opportunities to visit and observe exemplary teachers.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I had opportunities to read and to review educational research and theory with my mentor.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My mentor is empathic.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My mentor can describe teaching concepts in a way that is understandable.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My mentor has acted on my behalf.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

	What Is	What Should Be	Importance
I participated in decisions on school policy.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Teaching was what I thought it would be.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I think I will be teaching five years from now.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I felt pressured to teach in certain ways.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
We used technology to great advantage in our school.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
There were opportunities to exchange ideas with colleagues.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Students were responsive to the way I taught.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Motivating students was very difficult.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Classroom management was a problem for me.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I communicated with parents.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Our school functioned in an efficient and productive manner.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The rules and requirements in our school were reasonable.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please circle or fill in blanks in the following as appropriate.

This is my (first, second) year teaching.

I teach in the _____ school district.

I teach the following subjects at the grades indicated.

Subject _____ grade _____
Subject _____ grade _____
Subject _____ grade _____
Subject _____ grade _____

Please indicate the length of your teaching day, i.e., from when it started until the end of the last class. _____

The number of hours I taught each day was _____

The number of classes I taught each day was _____

The number of students I taught each day was _____

The extracurricular activities for which I had responsibility were:

_____
_____
_____